

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are again all the claims presently pending. Claims 1 and 3 are the only independent claims.

The Examiner rejects claim 7/(3-6) under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, alleging there is no antecedent basis for the recitation of "the bottom of the joined portion of any of the protruding portion and decorative portion...", with claim 3 only referring to "bottoms between the protruding portions adjacent to each other...". The foregoing amendments to claims 3 and 7 are believed to overcome this rejection.

Claims 1-7 are rejected on substantially the same grounds and for the same reasons as in the previous Office Action. In paragraph 9 on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner contends that JP '967 discloses protruding portions (2a in Fig. 5) that form characters or marks, and that the bottom of grooves 4 forms a joined portion "between protruding portions (as well as between a protruding portion and the surrounding decorative portion at the edges of the letters)" consistent with the present claims.

The Examiner may be correct as to the bottoms of the grooves 4 being "between protruding portions" (i.e., within any given character or mark) and "higher than the bottoms of the decorative portions" (i.e., to the sides of the given character or mark). However, although it is somewhat difficult to see in Fig. 5 of JP '967, the bottoms of the

joined portions between protruding portions and the decorative portion are the same level as (not higher than) the bottoms of the decorative portion. Certainly, there is no indication otherwise in this reference. Thus, claim 1 is hereby amended to recite that the bottoms of joined portions of the protruding portions and the decorative portion are higher than the bottoms of the decorative portion.

Regarding Vizina, the Examiner contends that the flat portions in Fig. 5 of Vizina are provided "between protruding portions" and "higher than the bottoms of surrounding decorative portions" and, therefore, the claims (i.e., claims 1 and 3) are also taught by Vizina. However, with the foregoing amendment to claim 1, this rejection is believed to be overcome, since Vizina also shows that the bottom of the joining portion between the protruding and decorative portions is at the same height as the bottom of the decorative portions, i.e., Vizina is no more pertinent in this regard than is JP '967 discussed above.

Claim 3 is amended in a similar manner to claim 1, i.e., to recite "...flat portions higher than the bottoms of the decorative portion are provided on bottoms between the protruding portions and the decorative portion...". Likewise, claim 7 is amended to recite that a height of the bottom of the joined portion of any of the protruding portion and decorative portion is set within a range of...".

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue that the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below.

A Petition for Extension of Time of two months with appropriate fee accompanies this document. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all additional required fees (with the exception of the Issue/Publication Fees) to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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